



The Phoenix Family Readiness Group Newsletter

1st Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division (M)



1st Edition, Issue 2 ~ 1 July – 1 August 2005

Families, friends and fellow soldiers of the Phoenix Battalion:

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. In this issue we will: meet the Rear Detachment Commander and 1st Sergeant, talk about services that will be available to you leading up to and during deployment, welcome a few units that will be joining the STB and take a look at some notes from the Battalion Operations Officer MAJ Patton.

There will be a Rear Detachment Command while the Battalion is deployed. The rear detachment mission is to maintain stability at home station and facilitate the movement of soldiers to and from Iraq. The Rear Detachment is responsible for everything that occurs at home station and they are the battalion's link to Fort Hood.

The Rear Detachment Commander is CPT Zebadiah Miller. CPT Miller has been with the battalion since it was re-flagged from the 299th Engineer Battalion to the 1st Special Troops Battalion and has served as a Platoon Leader and Executive Officer prior to his current duty as the Battalion Adjutant. Prior to his service on Fort Hood, CPT Miller served as a Detachment Commander and Executive Officer with the 258th Engineer Company (CSE) of the Arizona National Guard and attended the University of Arizona in Tucson.

The Rear Detachment 1st Sergeant, SFC Mengel is a 21 year veteran of the United States Army. SFC Mengel has also been with the battalion since it re-flagged. He spent two years as a Platoon Sergeant to include the first rotation to Iraq. Upon redeployment SFC Mengel took over as the Operations Sergeant in HHC and has been serving as the Battalion Operations Sergeant

for the last four months. SFC Mengel and his wife Sheila have two teenage sons.



From left to right: SFC Mengel and CPT Miller

During the deployment there will be many resources available to us. Your primary sources of assistance during the deployment will be the Family Readiness Group (FRG), Army Community Service (ACS) and the Rear Detachment.

Through your FRG you should be able to establish a chain of concern, which is the backbone of any FRG. It will be your primary source of information and your support network. The FRG can also coordinate training and classes to ensure that you are confident and prepared for whatever the future holds. This training is known as Army Family Team Building (AFTB). AFTB's mission statement is: "To educate and train America's Army in knowledge, skills, and behaviors designed to prepare Army families to move successfully into the future." Basically, AFTB's aim is to provide families the knowledge they need to be successful during deployment. The FRG will coordinate this training through ACS.

ACS like the FRG is a valuable resource. ACS can provide various classes, job assistance and other basic financial/need based services. For more information about

services provided by ACS, you can visit them online at www.hoodmwr.com/acs or you can reach them at 287-4ACS.

The Rear Detachment is another important resource. If the FRG hasn't been able to refer you to the appropriate agency the Rear Detachment's involvement is necessary. The Rear Detachment's Command Financial Specialist (CFS) can offer financial advice and assistance in the form of the Army Emergency Relief (AER). AER is basically an interest free loan, used only under emergency conditions. Stop in and talk to the Battalion CFS, SSG Browder if you are in need of assistance.

*****New Additions*****

Next, we'd like to welcome the Brigade Headquarters Company to the battalion. Historically HHD has been a stand-alone company, but with the new units of action and modularity it gave the Army an opportunity to give HHD a higher headquarters and a battalion that they could call home. Here are a few words from the HHD company commander:

Renegade!

HHD is the newest addition to the Phoenix Battalion. The Brigade Headquarters Company, known as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment (HHD), joined the Phoenix battalion on July 11th. We have been welcomed with open arms by the battalion and look forward to making this unique relationship prosper. The HHD contains 160 personnel and comprises the brigade staff and its support elements. CPT Ed Cox commands HHD, and 1SG John Justis is the HHD First Sergeant. Mrs. Jessica Rollins is the FRG leader."

Hound Dog!

HHC 1STB participated in its first field training exercise (FTX) after being re-flagged during 1st Brigade's "Task Force Lanes" from 5-15 July 2005. The company deployed to the field with over 120 soldiers to the two week exercise. The Soldiers endured high humidity and temperatures exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit while conducting "real-world" training that will help prepare them for our future deployments to the National Training Center and then to Iraq.

The major training event for the company during task force lanes was the convoy lanes. During convoy lane training, the Soldiers were organized into groups based on their platoon and given a mission to conduct a convoy (a convoy is a group of vehicles traveling together for protection). During the convoy, the Soldiers were evaluated on their ability to react to contact, IED explosions, and ambushes. After each iteration of lane training, the soldiers conducted an after action review. They discussed how the mission went and how they could improve as a team. Overall, the Soldiers performed brilliantly, showing their professionalism as soldiers and growing as members of a new team.

Other training conducted during the Task Force lanes included:

The Military Police Platoon establishing a Brigade Detainee Detention Cell. The detention cell was built to Division established standards and simulated the type of detainee detention cells that this company may be called upon to build and operate during our upcoming deployment to Iraq. The detention facility was visited by every commander in the STB's Chain of Command to include the Brigade commander and the 4ID Commanding General, General Thurman.



Above: The MP platoon conducts self recovery during a lane during TF lanes

The Support Platoon conducted daily Logistical Package (LOGPAC) convoys. These convoys delivered fuel, food, water, and ice which were critical to the Brigade's mission success to locations as far away as 40km from the company's Forward Operating Base (FOB). The Support Platoon's mechanics were even called upon to recover and repair the Assistant Division Commander of Support's HUMVEE when it broke down while traveling to and from the FTX site.

The medics established a Brigade Aid Station and sent a medic on every convoy leaving the company's FOB. The medics in HHC practiced their critical lifesaving skills daily on other Soldiers from the company. Soldiers from the company were encouraged to offer their arms to the medics so they could practice emplacing IV lines. The Medics also honed their skills as combat medics during the convoy lanes, rehearsing their procedures for evacuating injured team members off the battle field and providing critical first aid at the point of injury.

The Fox Recon platoon provided convoy security for LOGPAC convoys and provided dedicated perimeter security. The Fox Recon platoon showed their versatility



Above: SFC Jones (back turned) instructs one of his junior medics (PFC Scott) on how to administer an IV and ability to support the company's overall mission by going where they were needed and executing demanding missions on a moment's notice.

The HQ platoon established a Tactical Operations Center for the company, and tracked all the Soldiers leaving and entering the FOB, and maintained constant communications with higher headquarters and all convoys leaving the FOB. The HQ platoon worked tirelessly to ensure that all of the company's Soldiers were accounted for at all times.

The Security Section provided a dedicated front gate security and conducted patrols within the company's forward operating base. The security section established the standard for an entry point to a FOB, placing a clearing barrel within the perimeter of the FOB and directing all traffic attempting to gain access to our FOB.

The company's cooks provided the best field chow that I have ever eaten during a field training exercise. The food being served at the 1STB's mess tent was so good, in fact, that leaders from other battalions within the Brigade were scheduling their appointments at the Brigade Tactical Operations Center (TOC) to coincide with the company's chow times.

And finally, the Staff Platoon established the Battalion's Tactical Operations Center for the first time since returning from OIF. The Staff Platoon worked tirelessly behind the scenes to establish standard operating procedures for the Battalion TOC and ensure that all Soldiers in the field were accounted for at all times. The Staff platoon ensured that communication was always maintained with higher and lower headquarters. The Battalion was recognized for having the highest fully mission capable (FMC) rate for digital communications in the Brigade.

In all, the Task Force Lanes was a tremendous success for the company. It was the first time the company deployed to the field for a field training exercise. Task Force Lanes helped the unit come together as a team which was evidenced by the amount of work that was accomplished in the short two week time span. In the end, the company is better prepared to execute its wartime mission as a result of this training event.

NightHawk!

Greetings to all friends and family of the Phoenix Battalion and the Nighthawks! Regretfully, this is my last input to the Phoenix FRG newsletter. I am changing out with CPT Clayton Bell from 1-22 IN BN. I have commanded this company for twelve months now and it has been a privilege and an honor to serve with the Soldiers of A Co and 1st STB. We have been through a lot together over the past months, and we have struggled with personnel shortages and equipment shortages as we underwent transformation, but we still managed to accomplish the missions assigned to us. Most recently we participated in Task Force Lanes, in which we utilized all of our company's assets to provide intelligence

support to the Brigade Combat Team and subordinate battalions. This is the first time this company has provided that level of support since redeploying from Iraq and moving over to the STB.

I would like to thank 1SG Simmons, 1SG Boesen, and SFC Canady for the support they provided the Soldiers of A Co and myself. Without their outstanding leadership, the Company would have lacked senior NCO leadership to set the example for the Soldiers and to push the Company in the right place to accomplish the mission. I would also like to thank the Company XO's



The Commanding General of the 4ID Maj General Thurman (center) with A Co soldiers at Task Force Lanes

and Platoon Leaders for striving to meet the overwhelming demands I placed on them to ensure their Soldiers were cared for and led professionally. I know 1LT Allen and 1LT Render will lead their Soldiers successfully in combat a few months from now, and I know 1LT Mack, 1LT Bailey, and 1LT Tix have a bright future ahead of them now that they have moved on to other duties. I would especially like to thank Amanda Cuiksa for her endless support and dedication to the A Co FRG. Without her, the FRG would not have been successful and ready to support the Soldiers as they head off to war. Family members of single and married Soldiers can continue to contact her for support or to volunteer their support for the FRG.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge and thank the men and women of A Co. You have made this company successful and I am proud to have served with each and every one of you. I know you will provide CPT Bell the same level of support you provided for me, and I look forward to your future success in Iraq.

CPT Andy Gilman
Nighthawk 6

Eagles!

Bravo Company has had a busy month. Soldiers trained during Task Force Lanes on convoy operations (day and night), mounted land navigation and site defense. Soldiers returned from the EPLRs Network Manager's course at Fort Gordon and joined the company during TF Lanes. Bravo Company then transitioned to Joint Nodal Network Engineer support and Mission Readiness Exercise support for the Division and Corps. During this exercise Bravo Company served as the hub for a worldwide network that integrated units from 101st in Kentucky and Europe. Lastly, the Soldiers ran a two day M-16 Range which included a reflexive fire lane where 190 soldiers qualified on their rifles in two days. This month the company is gearing up for the JNN fielding. It will validate the system in an intense exercise that will test the abilities of both the systems and its operators. Congratulations to soldiers receiving awards for TF lanes, SGT Butler and SSG Brown!

Notes from the S3's Desk

The battalion has completed some strenuous training over the last month. The Raider Brigade's Task Force Lanes was a huge success thanks to the efforts of your Soldiers. The battalion's key leaders then immediately went to Ft Irwin to the Leader Training Program (LTP). The rest of the

battalion conducted after operations maintenance and prepared for future missions. We closed out July by qualifying soldiers on their assigned weapons during both day and night conditions. Your soldiers have been busy, but they are better prepared for deployment than they were last month. During the next three months we will continue to train and improve on our key battle tasks. Since the 1st Special Troops Battalion is critical to the success of the 1st Brigade Combat Team it is integrated into all their training. Again, I've highlighted some, but not all, of the training your soldiers will conduct over the next three months. Each company commander can give more details at the company FRG meetings in Aug.

5-17 August: Brigade TOCEX/JNN Validation. Starting on 5 August, the brigade will set up all command posts and Bravo Company will field an entirely new communications system for the Brigade. This fielding is the most significant change in the Signal Corps in the last 10 years. At the same time, the brigade will conduct final training for the deployment to the National Training Center (NTC). This will mean some long nights and guard force requirements from your soldiers.

9 August: A/1st STB change of command. Come out and watch your Soldiers as they say farewell to CPT Gilman and welcome CPT Bell to the company.

23 August: Battalion deployment training and company FRG Meetings. This training from 1700-1900 in the Phantom Warrior Center is designed for spouses, but soldiers are welcome also. Child care is available for those who would like to use it.

25 August: Battalion deployment training. This is a second opportunity for spouses to receive deployment training at 1000-1200 in the Phantom Warrior Center. Again, child care is available for those who would like to use it. If you cannot attend

either of these sessions, then we'll send your soldier to receive information for you. Don't let them forget to give you your packets!

(note: if children are not enrolled in Child Youth Services (CYS), there will be onsite registration, make sure you bring your children's shot records, contact your FRG leader for more information)

29 August-5 October: National Training Center (NTC). Starting on 29 August select soldiers will deploy ahead of the battalion to Ft Irwin, California to the National Training Center (NTC) as part of the Advance Party. The rest of the battalion will follow starting 31 August and by the 5th of September we will be training at Ft Irwin. This is the premier training event prior to our deployment. NTC provides the most realistic training soldiers can receive in the world. We will train against a professional opposing force in an environment that replicates real world situations. The rotation will comprise of 6 days of high intensity conflict and transition to 8 days of support operations and stability operations to certify the brigade for our Iraqi Mission. We will return home beginning 5 October and we should all be home by 13 October.

10-14 October: NTC Recovery, as we return from the National Training Center, we will receive our equipment, down load trains and conduct after operations maintenance so we can continue to prepare for our deployment to Iraq.

17-21 October: Range Week, we will build on our success at weapons ranges in July by conducting another round of weapons qualification in October. This will ensure that all soldiers in the battalion are prepared for deployment.

Finally, Karen and I look forward to meeting you at the deployment briefs and at the upcoming FRG events.

Phoenix!
MAJ Thomas "Dave" Patton
Battalion Operations Officer

Phoenix!

It has been a busy but very productive month for the Phoenix battalion. The soldiers of the battalion continued to train throughout the summer heat of July. You can be very proud of your soldiers as they worked hard during July's field training.

The battalion continues to prepare for the future deployment by training and preparing for combat. My thanks to all of the families who support their soldiers during the absences for the field and the long hours they sometimes work.

We are adding new members to our team as we continue to ramp up for deployment. In addition to HHD, I would also like to welcome: CPT Adam Miller and his teams from the 412th Civil Affairs Battalion, CPT Stacy Enyeart and her company from the 763rd EOD, CPT Shah and his teams from the 308th PSYOP battalion and CPT Dan Manley and his company, C/5th Engineers.

LTC John W. Cross
Phoenix 6

To Dare Is To Do

Larry A. Seaman
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army

John W. Cross
LTC, EN
Commanding